

PROGRESSIVE L.A. CONVENES October 19th, 2001

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BODY:

By some standards, it's been a rocky year for urban progressivism. In Los Angeles, not only did Antonio Villaraigosa's bid for mayor come up short, but something of a rift between the local black and Latino communities emerged during the campaign. In New York, last week's Democratic primary for mayor uncovered a more serious rift between Gotham's white liberals (who overwhelmingly supported Public Advocate Mark Green) and its black and Latino voters (who just as overwhelmingly supported Bronx Borough President Freddy Ferrer). But to see only the fissures in urban liberalism is to miss the renascent strength and coherence of the movement. In L.A., Republican Dick Riordan was succeeded by Democrat Jim Hahn; in N.Y., Republican Rudy Giuliani is likely to be succeeded by Democrat Green. And in L.A., the vibrant movement for urban progressivism includes the nation's most successful living-wage campaigns, an affordable-housing constituency that has won concrete pledges of support from the new mayor, an immigrant-advocacy community that has battled with some success for more equal access to the state's colleges and universities, advocates for parks and green space from every corner of the city, and supporters of both Hahn and Villaraigosa who have united in opposition to the destructive mischief of Valley secession.

Each of these five movements will review their successes and the challenges before them -- and all Angelenos -- at this Saturday's Next Agenda Conference sponsored by Progressive L.A. Network (PLAN), of which the L.A. Weekly is a part. Co-sponsoring the conference, which will take place at the California Science Center in Exposition Park, is the Institute for America's Future, the Washington-based think tank that has been the leading opponent of Social Security privatization and that currently is coordinating the drive for a progressive economic-recovery package. Panelists will include Chicago Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky, one of the brightest and most dynamic liberals on the national scene; state Assembly Members Judy Chu and Jackie Goldberg; L.A. City Council freshmen Eric Garcetti, Jan Perry and Ed Reyes; Robert Borosage and Roger Hickey from the Institute for America's Future (who will discuss the current battle for a decent recovery plan -- as will I), and a range of local labor, community and movement leaders and activists. Your best guide to what's coming down in D.C., in Sacramento and at City Hall, and what you can do about it, all yours for one day in the park.

